



Michigan Department of Education Report to the Legislature

2015 Michigan Merit Curriculum Report

Office of Education Improvement and Innovation
Curriculum and Instruction

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of this Report	4
Findings	4
Impact of the Curriculum on Student Success	4
Rigor and Relevance of Coursework	9
Ability of Schools to Implement the Curriculum and Required Coursework	10
MDE Activities for Assisting Schools in Implementation	15
Summary	16

Introduction

To ensure Michigan's students have the skills and knowledge needed for the jobs of the 21st Century global economy, on April 20, 2006, a rigorous new set of statewide graduation requirements was signed into law ([MCL 380.1278a](#), [MCL 380.1278b](#)). Considered among the best in the nation, these requirements, known as the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), were the result of an extraordinary partnership between the Executive Branch, State Board of Education, State Superintendent, Legislature, and numerous education associations who worked together to better prepare students for greater success and to secure the economic future of our state. Before the MMC the only state graduation requirement was a semester of civics; students could conceivably leave high school with a diploma but not ever having the opportunity to take a single math, English language arts (ELA), or science class. Now students are required to earn 18 credits, including 4 credits in mathematics and ELA, 3 credits in science and social studies, 2 credits in a world language, and 1 credit in the visual and performing arts and physical education/health, thereby providing all Michigan students the opportunity to be truly career- and college-ready.

What makes this piece of legislation so unique, however, is that it is no longer acceptable to graduate high school with credit based on seat time. Instead, all Michigan students are required to demonstrate proficiency in required academic standards in order to receive a diploma. Furthermore, in 2012, Governor Snyder proposed a new public school learning model: students should be able to learn “Any Time, Any Place, Any Way, Any Pace.” These shifts have put a spotlight on the need for teaching rigorous content with multiple access points and opportunities for success. Our challenge now is to support schools with instituting innovative systems of instruction that provide all students with opportunities to learn the content in ways that are applicable in business and higher education, by preparing them to:

- use technology and tools strategically in learning and communicating,
- use argument and reasoning to do research, construct arguments, and critique the reasoning of others,
- communicate and collaborate effectively with a variety of audiences,
- solve problems, construct explanations, and design solutions.¹

¹ *Characteristics of Career and College Ready Students*, <http://www.michigan.gov/k-12>

Career- and college-ready students possess the skills necessary to earn a self-sustaining wage and participate in postsecondary opportunities without remediation. The goal of the MMC is to foster learning for students so they will be able to approach their employer or college without the need for remedial training or course work.

Purpose of this Report

MCL 380-1278b requires the department to submit an annual report to the legislature that evaluates:

- the overall success of the curriculum,
- the rigor and relevance of the coursework required by the curriculum,
- the ability of public schools to implement the curriculum,
- the required coursework,
- the impact of the curriculum on pupil success,

and that details activities the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has undertaken to implement the MMC. This report will outline the progress made by students who are now accessing the MMC; the increase of the rigor of coursework being provided to students under the MMC; and the programs and MDE supports available to help schools implement the MMC.

Findings

The graduation requirements of the MMC continue to be effective and necessary for the success of our students as they move to postsecondary opportunities in the workplace and at college. Assessment scores, college enrollment numbers, and graduation rates have increased, based on data from MiSchoolData.com and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). Despite the change in the number of required credits for graduation, the percent of 11th and 12th grade students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) statewide has not decreased, but has remained constant since the MMC was put in place. Implementation of the MMC is helping Michigan students to be prepared for life beyond high school.

Impact of Curriculum on Student Success

The graduating class of 2011 was the first class to graduate under the MMC. These students were first exposed to Michigan's first career- and college-ready standards, the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) for mathematics and ELA, in 2004 when they were 6th graders. Despite not having the benefit of beginning their

education under Michigan's now more rigorous standards, data suggest that the MMC is having a positive impact on preparing more students to be ready for the demands of career and/or postsecondary training.

As cohorts of students move through school with the career- and college-ready standards fully in place, Michigan can look forward to increased scores on career- and college-ready measures such as the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), one indicator of student success. Students who participate in higher levels of math classes and benefit from more rigorous science classes are better prepared to demonstrate their knowledge through school and assessment performance. In the past, only students preparing to enter four-year colleges were held responsible for taking such courses. The requirements of the MMC ensure that all students will have access to more rigorous courses.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

Since the implementation of the MMC, Michigan's rate of students dropping out has decreased (Figure 1). Dropout rates have decreased from the time that more rigorous standards were implemented and the graduation expectations were raised.

Michigan Merit Exam (MME) Scores

MME scores in all subject matters, with the exception of Social Studies, have increased from the time of MMC implementation. Figure 2 shows the improvement in the scores of the core subject areas over the past five years. Proficiency scores show that we need to continue the high expectations and rigorous implementation of standards in content areas.

American College Test (ACT) Scores

ACT composite scores (Figure 3) have been rising over the last five years. Implementation of the MMC has provided more students with access to the career- and college-ready skills measured by the ACT.

CTE Students

In 2013-2014 the CTE Student Follow-Up Survey data² showed that 76 percent of students who completed a CTE program continued on to postsecondary education,

² Michigan Department of Education. (2013). *Office of Career and Technical Education - CTEIS Report: X0610 2013 Follow-up Survey of 2012 Completers*.

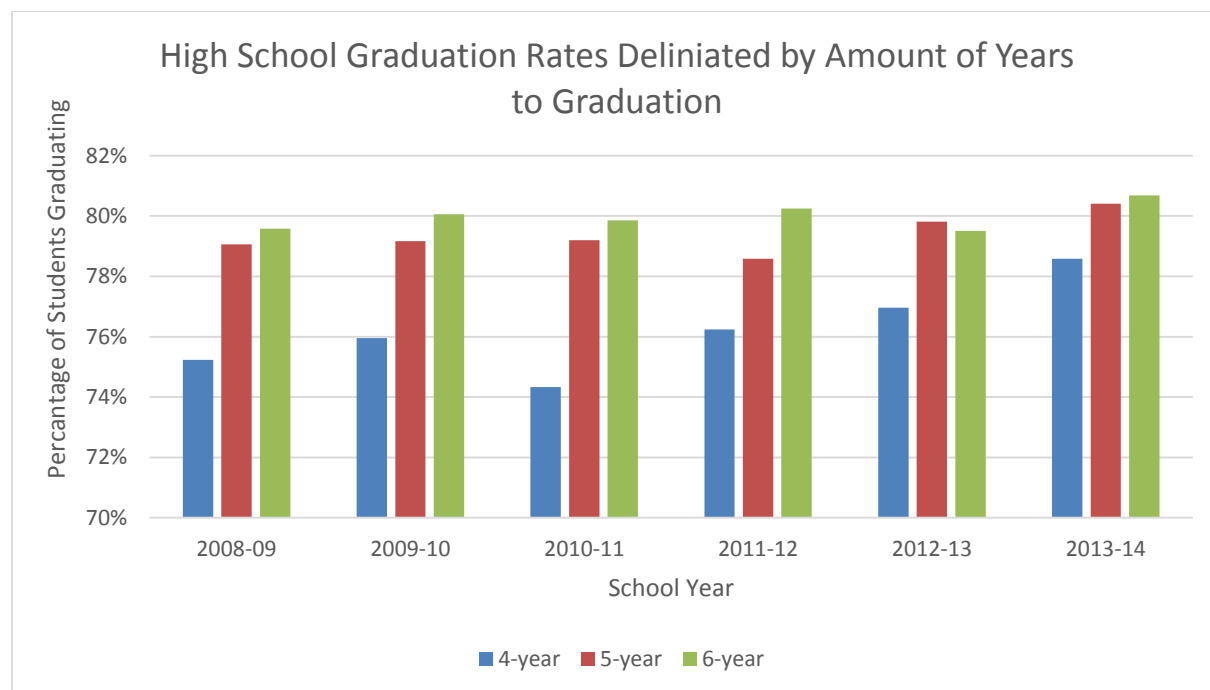
with 41.3 percent both employed and in school. Of those who continued on to postsecondary education, approximately 45.1 percent attended community colleges and 47.8 percent attended colleges/universities. Clearly, the majority of students who complete a CTE program elect to continue their education and are in need of rigorous academic courses that lead to a smooth transition to training or education beyond high school without remediation.

Conclusion of the Data

Together this set of data show increased achievement for students as the MMC has been implemented. With an increase in the number of students experiencing the higher level of courses required, the MDE expects the trend to continue.

Figure 1

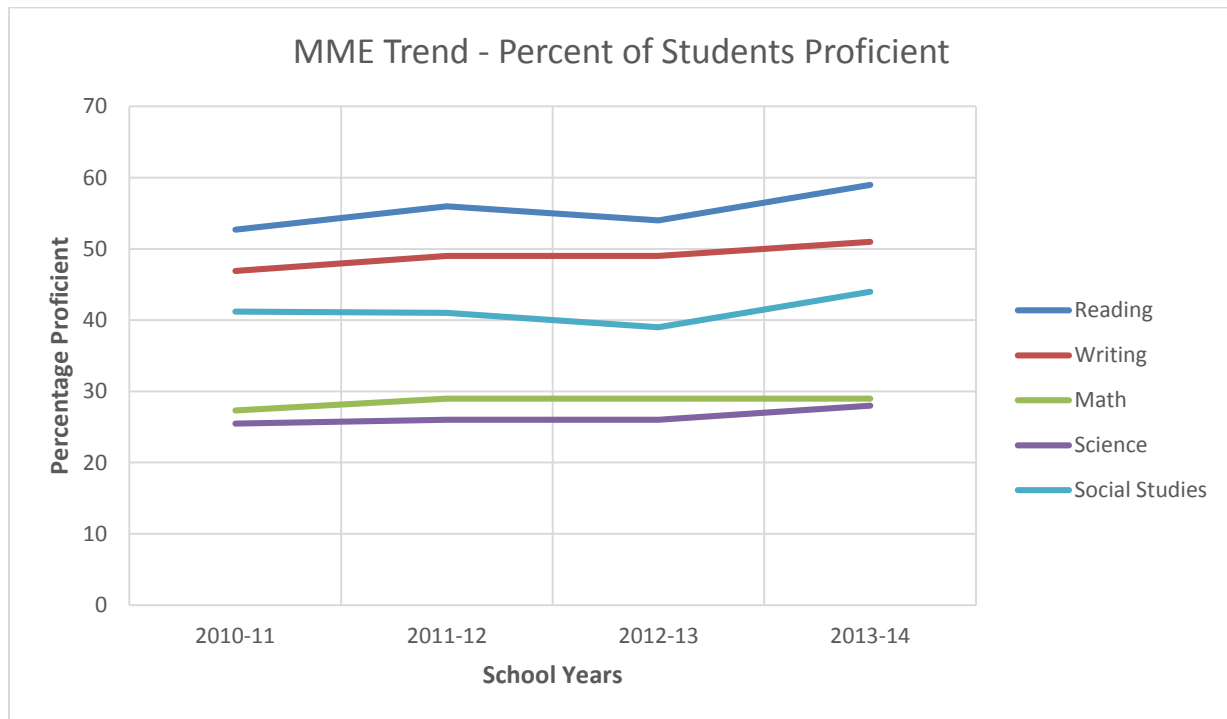
4 Year Graduation Rates³



³ All students; graph generated from MI School Data (www.mischooldata.org).

Figure 2

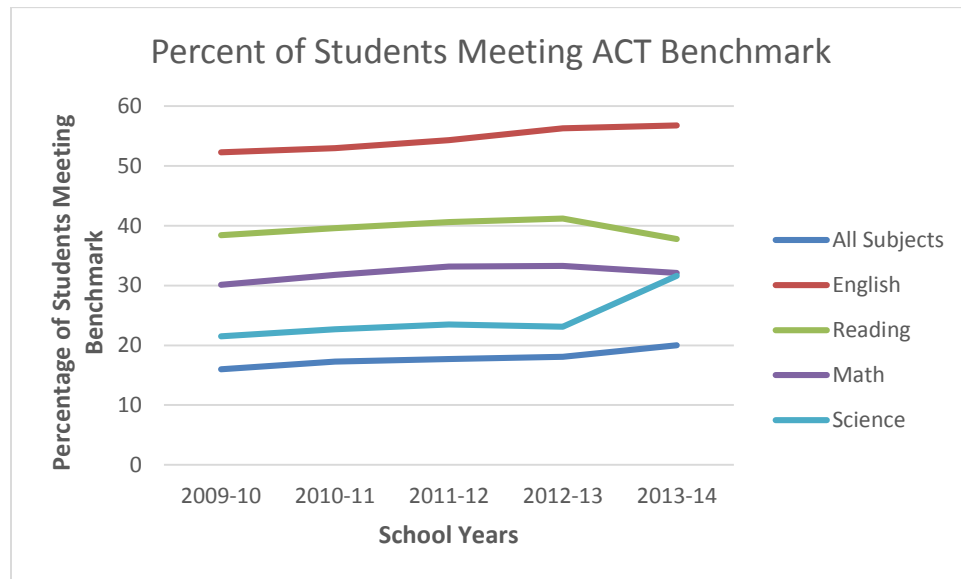
MME Trend - Percent of Students Proficient⁴



⁴ All students: graph generated through MI School Data (www.mischooldata.org).

Figure 3

ACT College Readiness Scores⁵



⁵ All students; graph generated from MI School Data (www.mischooldata.org).

Rigor and Relevance of Coursework

To be competitive, our students need high-level employability skills right out of high school⁶. We also need to increase the number of students who earn a postsecondary degree or certificate so they have more career choices. The MMC requires rigorous standards and coursework that will translate to knowledge and skills needed post-graduation. To this end, Michigan collaborated with other states to develop the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics and ELA. These are rigorous learning goals designed as a platform for building curricula that will help prepare a workforce capable of attracting the high skill, high wage, and high demand jobs that Michigan will need to position itself to attract new business and industry opportunities. Michigan also has developed content expectations for all content areas, again designed to help educators meet the

⁶ Achieve. (2011). *Making the Case: College Ready AND Career Ready*. Retrieved from <http://www.futurereadyproject.org/sites/frp/files/Flex-College-Ready%26Career-Ready.pdf>

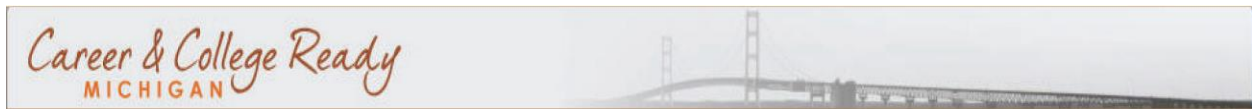
Dynarski, S., Frank, K., Jacob, B., & Schneider, B. (2012, October). *Impacts of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on Student Outcomes: Preliminary Findings from the First Cohort*. Retrieved January 2013, from Michigan Consortium for Educational Research: <http://michiganconsortium.org/downloads/brief-2-impacts-of-michigan-merit-curriculum-student-outcomes-preliminary-findings-from-first-cohort.pdf>

Dynarski, S., K., F., Jacob, B., & Schneider, B. (2012, October). *The Michigan Merit Curriculum and Teacher Compositional Change*. Retrieved January 2013, from Michigan Consortium of Educational Research: <http://michiganconsortium.org/downloads/brief-3-michigan-merit-curriculum-teacher-compositional-change.pdf>

Michigan Department of Education. (2012). *2011-202 Report to the House and Senate Fiscal Agencies and the Department of Management and Budget: Post Secondary Enrollment Options Act 160 of 1996 and Career and Technical Preparation Act 258 of 2000*.

Michigan Department of Education. (n.d.). *CTE 2011-2012 Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Factbook2011-12_rev_410523_7.pdf.

The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy. (2010, June). *Mandating Merit: Assessing the Implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum*. Retrieved January 2013, from University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy: <http://closup.umich.edu/files/pr-13-michigan-merit-curriculum.pdf>



requirements of the MMC that students leave high school proficient with the science and social studies skills they need to be career- college- and citizenship-ready.

Ability of Schools to Implement the Curriculum and Required Coursework

Schools are afforded supports and guidance for implementing the requirements of the MMC. The Career- and College-Ready Standards call for integration of content and subject matter, and flexibility measures are available for helping students to meet the MMC in multiple ways such as:

- Dual Enrollment
- Seat Time Waivers
- Personal Curriculum
- Career Technical Education
- Early/Middle College

Dual Enrollment

The Dual Enrollment bills expand students' ability to earn college credit while in high school and meet the MMC requirements. This legislation allows for approved nonpublic and public school students in grades 9-12 to take up to 10 eligible courses from eligible postsecondary institutions.

The Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (1996 PA 160) and the Career and Technical Preparation Act (2000 PA 258) allow students in grades 9-12 to enroll in postsecondary courses if:

1. The pupil has taken the MME, the ACT, the ACTPLAN® (PLAN®), or the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), and has received state endorsement or qualifying scores in the subject areas in which the pupil wishes to be dually enrolled at a postsecondary institution.

OR

2. The pupil has taken the MME, the ACT, the PLAN®, or the PSAT and has received state endorsement or qualifying scores in mathematics and has received a qualifying score on a department-recognized national or industry job skills assessment test.

Table 1 shows that over the past 12 years there has been a steady increase in the number of 11th and 12th grade students eligible for dual enrollment and the number of postsecondary and high school credits granted. There is also new data on 9th and 10th grade students.

Seat Time Waivers

The flexibility provided by Seat Time Waivers (STW) allows students to meet the MMC requirements through online or blended learning opportunities to learn the content needed for credit. Schools may apply for STW for students who will take more than two online courses. Table 2 provides information regarding students who take advantage of the STW.

Cost per pupil paid to each online education provider/vendor varies greatly. For example, the Genesee Network for Education Telecommunications (GenNET) online course providers and consortium pricing per semester range from \$49.00 to \$850.00. For courses that meet the 21F requirements, the range is approximately \$200 - \$389 per semester-length course.

<http://www.techplan.org/seat-time-waivers/>

Table 1

Dual Enrollment Data 2001-2013

School Year	Eligible 9 th -12 th Grade Students	Eligible 11 th & 12 th Grade Students	Number of Participants 9 th -12 th Grade	Number of 11 th and 12 th Grade Participants	Percentage of 11 th & 12 th Grade Students Participating	Percentage of Eligible Students Participating	Post-secondary Credit	High School Credit
01-02		87,149		8,526		9.78%	11,993	8,387
02-03		87,886		9,002		10.24%	12,751	8,780
03-04		105,059		8,841		8.41%	15,209	10,848
04-05		117,158		9,434		8.05%	14,272	10,319
05-06		149,910		10,540		7.03%	15,640	9,936
06-07		180,244		11,320		6.28%	17,946	10,229
07-08		191,809		11,058		5.77%	19,718	12,097
08-09		194,373		13,213		6.80%	21,188	14,285
09-10		194,357		12,992		6.68%	22,365	12,479
10-11		188,705		13,451		7.12%	28,941	14,851
11-12		190,766		15,513		8.13%	31,217	16,042
12-13	323,095	197,826	19,838	17,903	9.05%	6.14%	45,824	19,955
13-14	327,336	196,928	22,783	20,331	10.32%	6.96%	54,319	27,477

Table 2

Seat Time Waiver Data 2013-2014

	# of Students
Total number of STW students	11,035
Approximate number taking 100% of courses online	8,620

Career and Technical Education

CTE programs prepare students with the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills to enter, compete, and advance in education and their careers. During the 2013-2014 school year, about one-third of high school juniors and seniors took advantage of the opportunities provided by CTE. Local school districts continue to give academic credit for content earned through state-approved CTE programs.

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_2629---,00.html

Early/Middle College

Early/Middle College High Schools are generally five-year high schools located on a college campus or schools-within-a-school where students may attend as early as ninth grade. These schools provide students with both a high school diploma and substantial college credits or a certificate of completion. About half of the Early/Middle Colleges focus on Health Care or Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Careers. This flexibility for students offers another option for meeting the MMC. Currently there are 19 early/middle college high schools and 52 early/middle college programs across the state, with approximately 4,500 students participating.

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-43092_51178---,00.html

Personal Curriculum

The personal curriculum (PC) is a tool for modifying the MMC in order to individualize the rigor and relevance of the state graduation requirements. All students are eligible for a personal curriculum. The latest data indicate that the use of the PC has risen steadily since the inception of the MMC in 2006, and in the 2013-14 school year 4,994 students used a PC to modify the MMC to suit their needs.

Tools and resources are in place and continuously being developed to ensure students have access to the PC and that schools are appropriately utilizing the flexibility that this provides to students. The data in Table 3 illustrate the use of the personal curriculum by type, local education agency (LEA) distribution, and student subgroups, offering insight to where efforts should be focused to increase overall utilization.

The web page below houses the MDE guidance documents related to the personal curriculum. This includes the FAQ, educator and parent guides, and various other tools and resources.

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334_49879---,00.html

Table 3

Total Percentage of Students with a Personal Curriculum		Total Number of Students with a Personal Curriculum	
2012-13	2013-14	2012-13	2013-14
.90%	1.0%	4,509	4,994

Type	Distribution of Personal Curriculums by Type	
	2012-13	2013-14
Algebra II Modification (non-IEP)	1,306	1,346
Modification with IEP (Mathematics)	780	750
Modification with IEP (other than Mathematics)	335	497
Transfer student	64	75
Enrichment Modification (PE/Health)	2,054	2,249
Enrichment Modification (other than PE/Health)	796	865

	Distribution of Personal Curriculums by LEA	
	2012-13	2013-14
Total Number of LEAs statewide reporting personal curriculum implementation	136	174
Percentage of LEAs statewide reporting personal curriculum implementation	15.3%	19.5%
Total number of grade 9 - 12 students enrolled in LEAs reporting personal curriculum implementation	179,242	202,728
Total number of grade 9 - 12 students enrolled statewide	492,642	487,818

Subgroups	Distribution of Personal Curriculums by Subgroup	
	2012-13	2013-14
American Indian/Alaskan Native	22	31
Asian	223	231
Black or African American	342	392
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	3
Hispanic	182	195
Multiracial - two or more races	80	126
White	3,657	4,016
Economically Disadvantaged	1,540	1,681
English Language Learners, Eligible	134	100
Students with disabilities	1,196	1,310

MDE Activities for Assisting Schools in Implementation of the MMC

Although curricular decisions are the responsibility of the local school districts, the MDE is dedicated to promoting instructional systems that prepare all students to be career- and college-ready. To do this, we are working with other state education agencies and partners to identify and make available to schools the resources, tools, and information they need to make informed curricular and systems decisions. We have also sought to leverage opportunities to break down silos created by funding sources and task demands in order to provide schools with innovative approaches and ideas for using resources effectively and efficiently. Within the MDE, work for supporting the MMC has been organized into six categories:

- Effective Instruction and Interventions
- Effective Educators
- Balanced Assessment
- Accountability and Transparency
- Infrastructure
- P-20 Transitions

To assist schools in finding the resources necessary for helping students complete the MMC, including links to the supports listed above, the MDE has created the Career & College Ready Portal at www.michiganccr.org. This website offers organization around the work of the categories cited above and allows users to navigate with minimum-click browsing.

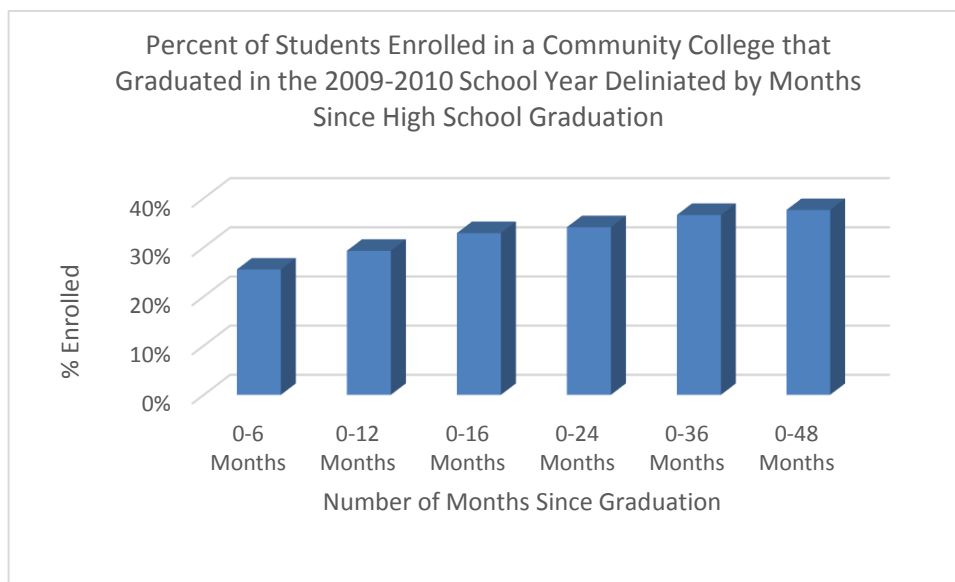
The MDE will continue to help schools understand how they can use the local flexibility listed above to assist students in meeting the requirements of the MMC. The MDE will continue to offer rigorous supports to Priority and Focus schools around the requirements so that all students have access to the high quality of standards expected.

Summary

For each cohort of students graduating in a particular school year, enrollment in postsecondary options increases as the amount of time since graduation increases over a four year period. For example, for all of the students graduating in Michigan in 2009-2010, the percentage of students enrolled in community colleges and 4-year colleges and universities increases from 0-48 months (see Figure 4). To continue to prepare our students for the rigor and independence needed for postsecondary education and to meet the demand for a skilled workforce, access to the requirements the MMC calls for is imperative. Furthermore, to save parents and students from expensive course remediation, students must be guaranteed that a high school diploma demonstrates mastery of career- and college-ready standards which lay the base for success in postsecondary opportunities.

Figure 4

Percent of Graduates Enrolled in Postsecondary⁷



⁷ All students; graph generated from MI School Data (www.mischooldata.org).

Percent of Students Enrolled in a 4-year College or University that
Graduated in the 2009-2010 School Year Delinated by Months Since
High School Graduation

